THE SEVENTH DAY.

24th February 1919.

The Assembly met at 12 noon on Monday, the 24th February 1919.

107. Certain Educational Reforms.

Mr. M. K. Govinda Pillai B A., B. L. (Member, Trivandrum taluk) said that, soon after the Dewan assumed office, there was immense difficulty in carrying on his responsible task, as the war had just broken out. In spite of the serious handicap thus placed, the administration had been conducted in such a manner as to earn undying fame. The presence of mind shown at a financial crisis and the earnestness displayed in the prosecution of educational reforms would ever be remembered by all classes of His Highness' subjects.

Coming to the subject-matter of his representation, the Member observed that, in spite of the remarkable progress made in education, there were certain defects which required looking into.

Taking His Highness' the Maha Rajah's College first, the Member made the following suggestions:—

Natural Science was being taught in the Intermediate Class as Group II which, however, formed Group III in the B. A. Class. As there was no chair for Natural Science in the College, those who wanted to take up that subject in the Intermediate or B. A. Class had to go outside the State. Group III should, therefore, be opened in the College.

The Philosophy Chair should also be revived, *i. e.*, Group IV. That subject was being taught since the establishment of the College, but was abolished without proper reasons. In all the important colleges in the Presidency, the Philosophy Chair was being maintained. Indian students had a peculiar aptitude for studying Philosophy. Furthermore, the students who took Logic in the Intermediate Class had to go to colleges outside for taking up Philosophy as their optional subject in the B. A. Class. The question of accommodation was easily solved, as, with the removal of the High School to the Vanchiyur building, there would be plenty of room in the College.

Sanskrit and Early Indian History *or* Sanskrit and Malayalam *or* Tamil had to be taken up for Group VI in the B. A. Class. Students very rarely joined that Group. According to recent changes introduced by the Madras University, Tamil *or* Malayalam *and* South Indian History might be taken as optional subjects. If arrangements could be made for teaching South Indian History for which teachers were available in the College, many students would take up one of the Vernaculars on the study of which too much stress could not be laid. The Member, therefore, recommended the introduction of South Indian History and a Vernacular as one group.

The Member next said that, if, as was proposed by the Principal of the College, the number of First Grade Colleges was to be increased, it was not a desirable step. As far as possible, Second Grade Colleges should be multiplied.

Touching the inspecting agency, the view of the Member was that the place of the Inspector of English Schools could be abolished with the appointment of one more Assistant Inspector, as the Director could be asked to devote greater attention to supervise the English schools. In regard to Vernacular schools, one Range Inspectorship could be done away with. Efficient inspection ought to be possible with one Director, one Deputy Director, one Inspector and 22 Assistant Inspectors. As there were lower grade and higher grade Vernacular schools, the term 'Vernacular *High* schools' which were above the '*Higher* Grade Vernacular schools' should be altered.

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Science was, no doubt, prescribed in the syllabus of studies for Vernacular schools. But no apparatus was supplied to teach science. Greater attention should be paid to it.

At present, some distinction was being observed in giving promotion to those who had passed the old Vernacular Higher examination and those who passed the recently introduced Vernacular Higher Examination. That should be stopped.

The pay of Head Masters of Higher Grade Vernacular schools was Rs. 20 with an allowance of Rs. 10. In view of the heavy work and great responsibility their duties involved, their salary should be increased and their status thus raised. They should also be selected as Examiners, and Superintendents of examinations.

Dewan.—What increase would you suggest?

Member.—Their pay should be raised to Rs. 50 per mensem.

In view of the decrease in the strength of class VII, which was due to increased fees and too many text-books which the boys were unable to buy, steps should be taken to remedy matters.

The selection of text-books was unsatisfactory. There were more of story-books which did not sharpen the intellect. Scientific subjects should be prescribed. Another defect was in regard to the large number and high price of the books selected. The only remedy was that Government should purchase the copyright of such books and fix a reasonably low price.

The Head Masters' Conference should be revived.

The Member submitted that female teachers should not be given full responsibility in regard to management and control and that male teachers should not be completely taken away from Girls' schools. The results of examinations in the two kinds of schools would bear out his statement. Up to class IV boys and girls might be taught in the same school or an age limit of 12 years might be fixed irrespective of classes. Separate latrines should be provided for boys and girls wherever they studied together.

At present Rural schools were being poorly inspected by competent officers, as that task was imposed on the Head Masters of neighbouring Higher Grade Vernacular schools, which should be put a stop to. There should be more efficient supervision of Rural schools. Instruction now imparted in industrial subjects was optional. It should be made compulsory. During the past 4 years School Leaving Certificates had been given to 17,037 pupils of whom only a small number could find employment. Such a large and increasing number of unemployed certificate-holders was a source of danger to the country. One remedy was by giving School Leaving men *i. e.*, those who passed out of class VII, preference over School Final men for appointments in departments in which Vernacular-knowing men would do. The introduction of the teaching of industrial subjects in Vernacular schools would, perhaps, have its own good result.

The Ayurveda Patasala and the Sanskrit College could be amalgamated by providing for the teaching of Ayurveda in the Sanskrit College, and after theoretical knowledge was obtained, the students might be placed under the sole charge of the Director of the Ayurveda department.

The last point of the Member was that the standard of qualification for admission to the Pleadership Class should be raised, as the School Final men now admitted were unable to follow the lectures.

Dewan.—What is your suggestion?

Member.—Intermediate Examination should be made the lowest qualification for admission.

Dewan's reply.—The suggestions of the Member will be referred to the Director of Public Instruction for an expression of his views. In regard to admission to the Pleaderships Class, the matter will be referred to the High Court.

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